

Shifted

GalaxyPegasus14

In-Progress

Metal Fight Beyblade/???????? ?????



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Table of Contents

[Summary](#)

[1. Half-breed](#)

[2. Darklings Arrive](#)

Summary

Gingka has a secret, one that he only found out about a few years ago. once he discovered it, he fled Metal Bey City. now, he is back, and Madoka is getting worried about him, especially when he starts dissapearing just before several dark creatures, known as Darklings, show up. GinMado, occurs somwhere during Zero-G. Rated K plus for minimal implied violence.

Half-breed

Ok, so I decided to post this story today, because I can, and because I have been waiting for a while to post it. Gingka will be mad at me from this point on for messing with him again, but I don't care that much, since this story is going to be so much fun to write! This story is also the reason why I am not updating Return of the Warrior or Legend Blader Prank War this weekend (that, and I have writers block) anyway, Gingka?

Gingka:-grumbles angrily- GalaxyPegasus14 does not own Metal Fight Beyblade, she only owns... ok, I'm out of here!

Me: hey, get back here! You are awesome in this story!

-Gingka's POV, Koma Village-

Two years after I had defeated Nemesis, I finally got the courage to ask Madoka out. She accepted, and for the next year we dated each other. That year was the happiest year of my life. But one night, shortly after I turned seventeen, it all changed. don't worry, nothing happened to Madoka, but something big happened to me. That night, I left, fleeing the city after I found out. I left no note, no indication of where I was going, I was too scared to think about things like that. And now, I can't go back. If I show my face while it is like this, if I release my secret to anybody, they will all hate me, I am sure.

What I am- what I have now become, is a monster. No one else on earth, none of my friends, can know what I went through that night. None of them can know the fear and insecurity I felt when I woke up in the middle of the night and discovered that I wasn't fully human. Before I could even get out of the city, my other side was almost completely showing itself. I wish I could go back, I really do. But maybe I can, if I can only hide it, the reason my dad always told me I had to cover up this mark on my forehead with something or other. It is in a certain form, a shape which, in ancient times, struck fear into the hearts of those who saw it, and caused them to banish the bearer of it as far away from them as possible, because of the ability it spoke of. All of that kind were supposedly either killed or managed to escape to another planet through a strange portal, where they now live.

Apparently, it was all but one. One family, who passed their powers down through the generations, all the way down to the last full-blooded one of them left on earth: my own mother. That is the basic story as my father told it to me that night, as I lay

there, fully transformed into my other half of sorts, my powers having overtaken me and showing themselves for the first time. That night, I found out the truth: I am half-shape shifter. That night, I woke up in the middle of the night with a weird feeling, and walked into the bathroom to find out that I was growing a tail. My eyes had turned reptilian, and my fingers had turned into claws. The moment I saw, I knew I had to get out of the city. By the time I got halfway to Koma Village, I had turned fully into an eastern dragon. I flew the rest of the way, it felt awkward, but cool at the same time. My dad explained it all, and told me how to get back to human, but I didn't change fully back.

Apparently, it takes a full week for the effects to fully go away, so until then, I stayed in my room, afraid to even look at myself, until I was back to 'normal' but nothing was truly normal anymore. I got to meet my mom, when I first saw her, she was half-bird. It was she who taught me to shift at will, into any animal I had touched. Apparently Bey Spirits count, that is why I was able to shift into a dragon. Guess I have Ryuga to thank for that... I can also do Pegasus, that is pretty much the only upside of it is that I can fly. That and breathe fire if I am in the dragon form. But even that gets annoying, because every time I sneeze... and then I have to suck it back in, so I can breathe and swallow fire.

I really want to return to Metal Bey City, but lately these things called Darklings have been slipping through the portal and to earth. I have visited the Shifter's planet, and now it is my job to not only protect the world from threats through Beyblade, but to protect them from the Darklings as well. This means of course, that I am rarely fully human with no traces of animal, dragon or otherwise. The traces go away slowly, after I shift back from a dragon, I have a tail, fire in my hair, reptilian eyes, claws instead of fingernails, and fangs. The tail goes first, along with the fire in my hair, both completely disappearing after about a day and a half. The next to go are the claws, which slowly flatten themselves out and dull over the first six days, along with the fangs. By the end, on the seventh day, my eyes are almost completely back to normal, my fingernails are just slightly sharper than a normal person's, and my teeth no longer stick out as much when I am talking. I only hope that I can go and not have to shift, because then I would have to hide for a week before reentering. I should just go, at least see Madoka one more time. I am currently on day five of my return to human, and by the time I could get there, if I didn't have to shift, I would at least look normal again, even if I actually wasn't. That decides it then, I'll go.

-Normal POV, Metal Bey City-

"Thank you, have a good day!" Madoka called, waving at the group of fourth graders as they left her shop, chattering excitedly about their new beys.

"I love seeing the excitement on the faces of young bladers when they first get their beys, its one of the most amazing things in the world!" Madoka sighed to the group of older bladers behind her who had been helping her out all day.

"Yeah, this was fun today, Madoka-chan!" Zero replied.

"Yeah, thanks for letting us help out here!" Ren exclaimed.

"No problem!" Madoka said, then suddenly fell silent as her gaze fell on a picture hanging on the wall. A tear suddenly formed in her eyes, and she quickly reached up and brushed it away.

"Are you ok, Madoka-chan?" Zero asked, his quick eyes noting Madoka's sad ones.

"Y-yeah, I'm fine" Madoka said, wiping more tears from her eyes.

"Want to tell us about it? We wont tell anyone!" Maru said, concerned.

"Are you sure?" Madoka asked, sniffling a bit and sitting down in a nearby chair.

"Yeah! If you don't want us to tell anyone, we wont! Plus, it sometimes helps to talk about it, right?" Zero asked.

"Yeah, I guess you're right. But let's go downstairs and sit down, it's rather a long story..." Madoka led the group downstairs to her workshop and they all sat on the old couch. On the way down, Madoka grabbed the picture off the wall.

"Ok, so what's bothering you?" Eito asked, snuggling up next to Madoka, along with Maru.

Madoka sighed and showed the picture she was holding to the younger bladers crowded around her. "This reminded me of something I had been trying to forget about for a while, but I still kept this picture up anyway, because I didn't want to completely forget about it.

"Whoa! Is that Tsubasa-san?" Shinobu asked, pointing at the silver-haired teen in the picture.

"Yup, that's him. He looks a lot younger, doesn't he?" Madoka replied.

"And that must be manager Benkei-san!" Zero pointed out the purple-haired blader, who was just next to Tsubasa.

"And- that's you!" Maru pointed out the short brunette girl standing between Tsubasa and another familiar figure.

"Is that-?" Kaito left the question unfinished as Madoka nodded.

"That was the last time we took a picture together, exactly two days before he mysteriously disappeared." Madoka replied, placing her finger on the redhead standing next to her with his arm around her shoulders.

"He disappeared? Where?" Zero asked.

"That's just it, I'll tell you the story, but I don't know what happened to him. It was five years ago, he was sixteen and I was fifteen..."

-flashback-

"Hey, Madoka! Wait up!"

"Gingka? weren't you training with Kyoya?"

"That can wait"

Madoka was caught off guard by this, as his training was seemingly one of the most important things to him.

"I just wanted to ask you something, and I think I finally got the courage to do it"

"O-ok, what is it?" Madoka replied, wondering what part of Pegasus he wanted her to test this time.

"I-I was wondering if we could go out for a burger or something sometime, just you and me. Or, if you prefer, we could go take a walk in the park or something"

Madoka was again caught off guard by the redhead's words. "D-did you just ask me out? Like, on a date?"

"I guess so, well, yeah, I did" he replied, blushing.

"Sure, maybe we could do that right now?" Madoka said, gesturing to the park nearby with its shaded grass and tall trees.

"Ok, and then we could get lunch afterwards!" Gingka exclaimed.

"I only have one question though," Madoka said as they entered the park, "just how long have you been waiting to ask me out?"

"Well..." Gingka trailed off, scratching the back of his head. "I asked your dad if I could about a year ago, and he said I had to wait until you were fifteen to ask you, otherwise it was fine with him."

"You went to my dad? Wait, you didn't just ask him if we could get burgers, did you?"

"Um..." Gingka avoided Madoka's surprised gaze, staring at his black boots with an unusual interest.

"You-you asked him if you could actually date me, didn't you?" Madoka continued.

"Y-yeah, I- I did" Gingka's face turned beet red as he confessed.

"But that must mean- you like me and want to be more than friends, to put it indirectly!"

"Listen Madoka," Gingka said, finally gaining his courage back, "yes, I was afraid to admit it to you, but I have had a crush on you since that first time when you fixed Storm Pegasus and I watched you staying up late to do so. In my opinion, you are the best girl a guy could ever want!" he turned to her, his golden eyes sparkling.

"Gingka..." Madoka trailed off, completely caught off guard. "and- you are the best guy a girl could ever want too!"

Gingka smiled. "Ok, so I promised your dad no kissing, so we'll settle for a hug." with that, he proceeded to wrap his arms around her shoulders. Madoka closed her eyes and leaned her head on his shoulder. After standing like that for about a minute, the two broke apart. They spent the rest of the day together, daydreaming and talking about plans for the future. Over the next year, they went out on many dates together, some with the supervision of Madoka's father, such as when they went dancing, and some with friends such as Kyoya and Hikaru, who were also dating. Almost twice a week, Gingka would show up at the B-Pit with some new idea for them to try, some new adventure. Once, they had gone to the WBBA and prank-called Tsubasa from the phone at the front desk. He still hadn't figured out who that had been that night. The night Gingka disappeared, they had just gotten back from dinner and a movie, and Madoka's father was out on a business trip. Gingka still knew his limits though, and hugged Madoka goodnight before heading upstairs to his own room to go to bed. In the middle of the night, Madoka had heard

him go into the bathroom, and she saw the light turn on. However, she thought nothing of it, until she heard the front door slam. "Oh well, he probably just went for a walk" Madoka thought, familiar with his habit of going stargazing from the top of Metal Tower, the place where he first battled Kyoya. Usually, she would go with him, but she was too tired tonight, so she shrugged it off, thinking that he would be back by morning, and went back to sleep.

The next morning, she woke up to the phone downstairs ringing. She quickly got up, pulled on her robe, and went downstairs. When she answered, a doctor had informed her that her father's plane had crashed, and unfortunately, he had not survived. He said that her father's last words had been that she was to make her own decisions now, and that she would have to set the boundaries in her relationship with Gingka. Madoka decided that she would keep the same ones in place, but right now, she needed a hug. She went upstairs and knocked on Gingka's door, assuming that he would be back from the last night. When he didn't reply, she assumed he was asleep, and went in to check. However, the tangled bed sheets and knocked-over alarm clock informed her otherwise, and told her that Gingka had left his room in a hurry. An investigation in the bathroom gave the same information, as several objects were on the floor and the light was still on. When she went downstairs, Madoka discovered that he had also left the front door unlocked. The fact that Gingka was gone, plus the fact that she was now an orphan, caused Madoka to break down in tears. She carefully locked the front door to the B-Pit, and ran to the next closest person she could think of- Tsubasa. She only hoped that either he or Hikaru would be awake and let her in, as it was still fairly early. Tsubasa looked up as Madoka entered his office in tears. He quickly saw that something was wrong -why wasn't Gingka with her?- And he got up to comfort the sobbing brunette.

"Madoka, what happened?" he asked, very concerned for her.

"I-I got a call from a hospital in China and found out that my dad died this morning after a plane crash, and Gingka went out last night and I don't know where he is, he hasn't come back yet!" Madoka said in between sobs.

"Come on, lets go see if we can find him!" Tsubasa said, pulling on his coat. Madoka followed him outside. "now, where are the most likely places for him to go?"

"Well," Madoka wiped away a tear. "probably Metal Tower or down by the river, he likes going stargazing there, but he left in a hurry, I found several things knocked over this morning."

"Did you try calling his cellphone?" Tsubasa asked as they entered the B-Pit,

Madoka remembering that she had forgotten her own coat.

"No, I didn't, let me try now" Madoka pulled out her phone and called Gingka. After a couple of seconds, they heard it ringing upstairs. "he-he left it here" Madoka whispered.

"Great, maybe he will come back for it" Tsubasa said. "let's leave a note just in case he does!"

"Ok" Madoka said, quickly scribbling a note for Gingka and leaving it on the counter where he would be sure to see it. After searching Metal Bey City all day however, the two found nothing. Nobody had seen the Legendary Blader or any traces of him whatsoever. Weeks went by, and he still didn't show up. Madoka ran the B-Pit by herself, with Tsubasa and Benkei supporting her and constantly reassuring her that something must have come up that Gingka had to go help with and he had not had time to leave an explanation or a note.

-end flashback-

"So... that's why you were crying?" Zero whispered.

Madoka nodded.

"I'm sure he will come back someday then! Or at least find some way to get in contact with you!" Zero exclaimed.

Madoka smiled. "Thanks guys, I haven't lost hope yet that he will, but it's hard to think about. You can't tell anyone about this, ok?"

"Got it, we won't! Your words will stay in this room!" Eito promised.

"Let's go battle!" Zero exclaimed, breaking the awkward silence a couple of minutes later.

"Yeah! Lets go!" everyone else exclaimed.

Madoka smiled. *"Yet, there is still one part I didn't tell them"* she thought, getting up and opening a drawer. Her hands trembling, she pulled out a box inside, set it on her work desk, and opened it. Reaching inside, she pulled out a launcher, grip, and the gear that held it, as well as a small box, which contained a bey. She set the gear aside and opened the box. Inside lay Gingka's Pegasus, which he had also left that night in his hurry. "surely he will come back for this" Madoka whispered, placing the

gear and be back in the box and closing it, then replacing it on the drawer and closing that as well. "Wait for me guys!" she pulled on her brown jacket and ran out after the excited group of young bladers.

-Two days later-

"See you later Madoka-chan!" Zero shouted, running out of the B-Pit with his newly repaired Ifraid.

"Have fun Zero!" Madoka called after him, then went to the front door and turned her sign to closed. Next, she went around the various shelves, picking up items that had been knocked down by the stream of younger bladers that had come in that day, and replacing items that had been put back in the wrong places. She was about halfway done when the bell at the front door rang, indicating that someone had come in. Madoka sighed and stood up. "We're closed, didn't you-" she froze, mid-sentence. "G-Gingka? Is that... you?"

The redhead standing just inside the door nodded quietly.

Madoka dropped the beylauncher she was holding and rushed over to him, enveloping him in a hug. "Why did you leave?" she sobbed.

Gingka wrapped his arms around her shoulders and rested his chin on the top of her head. "I'm not even sure myself," he said quietly, "but I'm back now. Is your dad here? I want to talk to him about something."

"Gingka," Madoka started sobbing even harder, "my dad died the night you left, it's been just me here for the past four years"

"I-I'm sorry, Madoka. I should have thought to leave a note or something, but, as you have probably found, I even forgot my bey in my hurry to leave."

"Don't worry, I kept it for you, but you left when I needed you the most."

"Again Madoka, I'm really sorry, I couldn't have stopped myself from leaving. I don't even really know what happened, but I'm here now if you need me. I might have to leave again for a couple of days or so occasionally, but I'll at least be close by" he smiled, looking a bit sad.

"Want to go get your bey? I think there are a few bladers down at Bey Park who would like to challenge you" Madoka said.

"Why don't we let that wait, I'm probably a bit rusty with my blading skills anyway. Let's go for a walk by the river instead" Gingka replied.

"Alright, but, next time, if you have to leave, can you leave a note for me please?" Madoka asked, locking the front door to the B-Pit and deciding that cleanup could wait.

Gingka smiled "I'll try to do that" he replied.

Madoka wondered at his apparent sadness, but decided that it must be about her father. Yet, something was different about him, and it wasn't just that his overall hairstyle had changed, it was something different, something she couldn't quite explain. After spending about an hour with him, she figured out it was something with his eyes. Before, they had always held her captivated, she had always found herself breathless whenever he turned his golden-brown eyes onto her face. As she looked at them now, they seemed different somehow, before, they were filled with the fiery spirit he had held as a blader, his passion for everything he loved had always been burning bright there, shining through his eyes. Now, they seemed to hold a fiercer look, and Madoka was almost afraid of them. There was still a fire in them, but it wasn't quite the same as before. Also, they seemed to look a bit different. Madoka soon shrugged it off as just a tiredness from traveling, or a new maturity level he had reached. He seemed quieter now, more reserved than before, and still saddened by something. Having known him for ten years now, Madoka could tell that something was bothering him.

"Gingka?" she said, almost afraid to speak.

"Hmm?" he turned his eyes onto her face, which instantly heated up.

"Are you okay? You seem different somehow"

"Do I? I'm fine" he reassured her, but she could tell he was lying. However, she assumed it must be something he didn't want to talk about, and decided to give him some time.

"Do you need a nap or something? You seem tired."

"Yeah, I guess I am a little tired, I came straight here from Koma Village without stopping once, then came straight to the B-Pit once I got here."

"Let's go back there then, so you can rest" Madoka said, guessing that that was the reason for his apparent change of personality.

"Alright"

Madoka was a bit surprised, usually he would have protested that he was fine, and would have later fallen unconscious once he wore himself out. *"He must have matured even more than the last time I saw him"* she thought. *"it's kinda weird, actually, if that is the case, this is going to take some getting used to"* she silently led the way back to the B-Pit, Gingka immediately going upstairs and into his room, which Madoka had kept ready for him. A couple of minutes later, Madoka went upstairs and poked her head into his room, only to see him sleeping peacefully, or so she thought. She smiled and closed the door, then went back downstairs to finish cleaning up the shop.

As soon as he heard her going downstairs, Gingka opened his eyes, all of his new instincts from the various animals he could become sending him a ton of different messages. He sat up carefully, trying hard not to make any noise that would worry Madoka. He carefully sorted out all the instincts entering his mind, trying to figure out which one was telling him to do what. Confused by his own thoughts, he let out a low growl in frustration, his over-sensitive ears picking up the noise of Madoka jumping, startled, just below him. *"Darn it, you have to think about these things before letting out a noise like that!"* Gingka thought, mentally slapping himself for growling out of habit. He laid back down quickly and pretended to be asleep again as Madoka came upstairs to see if he was alright, having heard him growl, but not knowing that it had been him. However, she again was fooled by his acting, and went back downstairs to continue on with her work. A couple of minutes later, Zero and the others entered the B-Pit, talking loudly.

"Shh!" Madoka put a finger to her lips and silenced them.

"Why do we have to be quiet?" Zero whispered, confused.

"Because, someone is sleeping upstairs and I don't want you to wake him up, he's really tired right now" Madoka replied quietly.

"Who?" Eito asked.

"Gingka, he showed up this afternoon just after I closed the shop, he has been traveling for the past couple of days and needs rest" Madoka replied.

Gingka, still awake upstairs, heard their conversation and smiled. *"Although, because of the instincts and abilities I now have, I can actually go quite a while without sleeping. I am tired though, guess I should go to sleep anyway, but I'm just not feeling like it right now, I can't get to sleep. Guess I'm pretty convincing though,*

since I have fooled Madoka twice"

"He's here? Cool!" Zero said, getting excited.

"See? We told you he would come back! Do you know why he left now?" Maru asked.

"Not exactly, for some reason, he didn't even know why he left" Madoka replied, wondering what the real reason was.

Gingka face palmed. "*Great, now I have to come up with an excuse! Now I'm hungry again... stupid animal instincts...*" again, he tried to suppress the thoughts coming into his mind. After sitting there for a couple more minutes debating what to do, the desire to go to sleep finally won out, and he was soon sleeping peacefully.

Gingka: this is what happens when you let her imagination run wild... and give her a couple of hours to LARP...

Me: its called insanity, and me and a couple of other authors I know happen to be experts at it, so while we are around, you have no chance of escape!

Gingka: -sweat drops- but you had to make me only half-human? Really?

Me: hey, I like shape shifters! And I couldn't make you fully shifter unless your dad was a shifter too, so I made you a half-breed... you are the only one who can turn into a dragon, so you should be thanking me...

Darklings Arrive

Ok, since I am now back from my unplanned two-month hiatus, I am updating! Well, I guess that much was kinda obvious though...

Gingka: Talk about it...

Me: Well, anyway, here's the next chapter! This one has been waiting since I posted chapter 1, so I didn't have to write it! Hopefully I can stay ahead with the chapters I have written and posted...

After sleeping for around five hours, Gingka woke up. Glancing outside, he saw that it was quite dark, and he could hear Madoka snoring softly down the hall. Slowly, using his own newly-acquired skills, he climbed out of bed and opened the curtains, then the window, taking a deep breath of the night air. His eyes, now back to normal, scanned the city outside, as he found that he did not need the nocturnal abilities gained by touching a cat and several other types of animals. Gingka sat in the windowsill and swung his legs up into it, sitting with his knees almost to his chest, watching the twinkling city lights below.

A couple of hours later, after the sun had risen, Madoka got up and knocked on Gingka's door.

"Come in" he called.

Madoka walked in and found him still sitting in the window. "Gingka? What are you doing?"

"I was just watching the sunrise and the traffic below" he replied, swinging his legs back into the room and getting down.

"Guess you slept well then, you sound a bit happier this morning"

"Yeah, I must have been just tired" Gingka grinned back at her.

"Want to come help me fix breakfast?"

"Sure! Just give me a second to clean up the mess I made in here" Gingka turned to make his bed and pick up his jacket, which he had thrown on the floor. Five minutes later, both were in the kitchen, Madoka was pulling the milk out of the

fridge as Gingka mixed some eggs up for her to cook. Madoka tried to light the stove as Gingka went to set the table, but found that it wouldn't light. She tried several times before going to get the matches.

"Where are you going?" Gingka asked as she passed him.

"The stove won't light, I was just going to get the matches" Madoka replied.

"Ok" Gingka turned back to the kitchen to get the bacon.

"Aww man! We are out of matches!" Madoka exclaimed.

"That's okay, I got it to light" Gingka called back, rushing over to the stove, making sure Madoka wasn't looking, then turning the knob and carefully blowing a small fireball onto it. Satisfied with the results, he stood up and placed a pan on the stove, just as Madoka walked in.

"How did you do that?" she asked.

Gingka shrugged. "Guess I just have a skill for it" he joked.

Madoka laughed. "Yup, all you needed was some rest and you are back to yourself again!" she exclaimed.

Gingka chuckled as he turned back to chopping onions for an omelet. "*Or so you think*" he thought, grabbing another onion.

After eating breakfast, Madoka went downstairs and grabbed Gingka's launcher and bey gear out of the drawer she had been keeping them in for him, then opened the B-Pit while he sneaked out the back door to go train.

"Alright Pegasus, let's see if we still have it in us!" Gingka exclaimed, running to the edge of town through back alleyways and smaller roads to avoid detection. Once he reached the edge of town however, his sensitive ears picked up the distinctive sound of bey clashing with rock nearby. Curious as to who else was out here training, Gingka carefully crept behind an abandoned bulldozer and peeked out.

"Go, Ifra!d!" Zero called, completely unaware of the presence of the Legend Blader, sending his bey flying into a third pile of debris, which exploded. "Yeah, that's it! Faster, Ifra!d!"

As Ifra!d charged towards a fourth pile, it was met with resistance from a bey that

seemingly came out of nowhere. Zero, after watching Ifraids land at his feet, looked around to find the blader, but saw no one. The opposing bey however, was spinning between him and the pile he had been trying to knock over previously. Zero looked at it carefully, it was obviously not a Synchrom, judging by the dark blue top with a red ring around the outside, it was an original-style bey. Zero quietly ordered Ifraids to attack it, somehow getting the feeling that he had seen this particular bey before, but not remembering where. It easily repelled his attack however, and did not budge from where it was spinning, steadily, tauntingly.

"*Is it a defense type then?*" Zero wondered, ordering Ifraids to circle it. Suddenly, the other bey made a clanking noise, and attacked Ifraids, tossing it into the air with one move, then returned to its original position.

"Ifraids! Shooting Star Attack!" Zero ordered, sending Ifraids crashing down towards the other bey, which jumped off of a nearby rock and met his attack in midair, then landed, again resuming its defensive position. "Wha- it acts like a defense type, but it has unstoppable attack power!" Zero said, surprised at its quick reaction time.

Meanwhile, behind the bulldozer, Gingka was trying to climb up to the top of it, so that he could see the battle from above. He chuckled when he heard Zero's surprised comment. "Well, it is an attack type" he muttered to himself, finally getting a foothold on the back of the tall machine he was scaling. As Ifraids attacked again, Gingka forgot he was a half-breed shifter, and once again became a Legend Blader, ordering Pegasus to attack with such swiftness and accuracy that he knocked Ifraids back into a pile of debris, which exploded from the force, again surprising Zero. This time however, Pegasus began circling like the attack type it was, as Gingka switched to barrage mode with another clanking noise, which didn't go unnoticed by Zero.

"Is it... changing modes?" he wondered aloud.

"Yes it is, pretty good guess there" a voice said from above him.

Zero whirled as a shadow fell over him from behind, and his eyes widened in surprise at the blader who was standing on top of the bulldozer.

"Well, aren't you going to counterattack?" Gingka asked, sending Pegasus towards Ifraids again.

-Meanwhile-

"Hey Maru, have you seen Zero?"

"Hm? Oh, hey Shinobu, Kaito, Eito, Ren! I think Zero was going to train at the abandoned construction site at the edge of the city!"

"Thanks Maru!" the four yelled, running off towards the edge of town. As they got closer to the abandoned construction site, they heard the sound of beys clashing.

"Ifraid! Get him! Shooting Star Attack!" Zero yelled as his friends ran up behind him, standing in the shade of a bulldozer.

"Zero!" Ren called. "who are you battling?"

Zero did not hear her however, as he was too focused on the battle.

"Counter it!" another voice, undoubtedly Zero's opponent, called. As the two beys collided, an explosion rocked the entire area, and the old, rusted bulldozer crumbled. "Whoa!" Gingka shouted, falling off into the rubble, which buried both their beys and stopped the battle.

Ren, Shinobu, Kaito and Eito just stared as Gingka got up and began hunting around for his bey.

"Ok, so I found yours, now where's mine?" Gingka muttered, handing Ifraid to Zero, who helped him look for his Pegasus, which Gingka's sharp eyes soon found. "great, now we have to start over, but we might as well make it a Battle Royal while we are at it" Gingka said, turning to the stunned group standing behind him. "Think you guys are up to it?"

Shinobu hesitated for a moment.

"Come on, Shinobu! Lets do it!" Zero said, readying his launcher.

"3!" Ren was ready to go.

"2!" Gingka reacted, whipping out his launcher at the same time as Shinobu

"1!" Eito and Kaito were ready.

"Let it Rip!" all five beys flew from their launchers at blinding speeds, Kaito and Eito instantly teaming up against Gingka, who knocked them away easily. Meanwhile, Zero was locked in a fierce clash with Shinobu at the center of the

stadium, which Pegasus soon took over, sending Ifraid and Saramanda flying into Levizer and Oroja.

"Looks like I haven't lost my touch after all!" Gingka called. "Pegasus!" the five young bladers heard another distinctive clank as Pegasus switched to upper mode. They held their breaths, waiting for the Legend Blader to make his move. Five minutes later, the battle was still at a stalemate when Madoka, Benkei, and Maru arrived to see how the training was going.

"Hey Gingka!" Benkei called, surprised. "when did you get back?"

"Yesterday evening" Gingka replied, not taking his eyes off of Pegasus.

"Oh yeah, I forgot to mention that he was back" Madoka said. "what are you guys doing?"

"Waiting for each other to make a move" Gingka said, leaning against the remains of the bulldozer he had been standing on earlier.

Across the clear area they were battling in, Zero was whispering to Shinobu and Ren, who passed on the plan to Eito and Kaito. On cue, the five beys spread out around Pegasus evenly, then attacked from all directions.

"Or not" Gingka said calmly, watching the five beys attacking his own.

"Keep going guys!" Zero called, ordering Ifraid to keep pushing. "alright, one more time!" all five pulled back and once again charged the now-wobbling Pegasus, which was barely spinning.

"Isn't he even going to fight back?" Maru asked.

As the other five beys charged Pegasus Gingka, who had been leaning against the bulldozer with his arms crossed and eyes closed, smiled.

"He has to have something up his sleeve!" Madoka said.

At that moment, the other five beys collided with Pegasus, knocking it to its blader's feet, barely spinning. Gingka ordered Pegasus to regain its former defensive position at the center of the arena, and Ifraid charged it one more time with a follow-up attack, the other four following right behind it.

"Ifraid!"

"Saramanda!"

"Phoenic!"

"Oroja!"

"Levizer!"

"Pegasus!" Gingka reacted at last, stepping forward. He only had a couple of moments before impact, and impact would mean defeat. "Final Drive Mode! Special Move, Big Bang Tornado!"

The stunned group, including Maru, watched as Gingka's Pegasus quickly regained its spin power, then went rocketing around the stadium with its special move, which soon had all their beys landing at their feet, motionless. "nope, now I am absolutely sure that I have not lost my touch!" Gingka said, catching the victorious Pegasus out of the air.

"H-how did you?" Zero was especially stunned.

"Final Drive Mode," Madoka said, "is an ability unique to Gingka's Big Bang Pegasus alone. The performance tip, which in normal battle is a semi-flat tip, switches at Gingka's command to rubber flat, providing regained stamina, as you may have noticed, and nearly four times the attack power as before!"

"I couldn't have explained it better myself Madoka!" Gingka said, somehow ending up beside Madoka.

"Wait, how did you...?" Madoka trailed off, pointing at Gingka, then the ground where he had been standing.

Gingka shrugged. "Haven't you noticed that I-whoa!" he was interrupted as the pile of debris he was standing on gave way. "Tend to have the ability to just show up randomly and disappear as well" he finished, standing up and dusting himself off. "seriously, the stuff I am standing on keeps falling out from under me!"

Zero chuckled, finally snapping out of his surprise and picking up Ifraif from the ground. "Yeah, first the bulldozer, and now this!"

"Pretty much" Gingka replied as a loud roar shook the air.

"W-what was that?" Madoka asked, her eyes widening in fear as she noticed a

column of dark-looking energy rising from the ground between them and the horizon.

"Excuse me for a moment while I go check that out, if I'm not back in a week come looking for me!" Gingka called, running off.

"What? Gingka, wait!" Madoka started running after him, along with Zero and the others, including Benkei, who was just curious what they were up to. They entered the forest, and soon completely lost track of the redhead.

"Where did he go?" Madoka panted, listening carefully for sounds of anything running through bushes.

"I don't know, let's go back, it's really dark in here!" Benkei said, turning to go back.

"But he has to be around here somewhere!" Madoka started examining the bushes for a footprint or snapped twigs that might indicate which way Gingka had gone.

"Umm, guys?" Benkei called nervously.

"What? Did you find something?" Madoka turned, and instantly froze.

"W-what is that thing?" Ren asked.

Kaito found his knees knocking worse than they had at the midsummer beach when Gen Kikura had shown up.

The monster hanging from the tree in front of them opened its mouth and roared, exposing rows of sharp white fangs. It dropped to the ground on all fours, and began making its way towards them, red eyes gleaming, bat wings extended behind it, sharp claws digging into the ground as it prepared to pounce. However, it never did pounce. Instead, it froze, its eyes focused on the trees behind them, then shrieked in fear and ran away.

"Ok, now I agree with Benkei, let's get out of here!" Madoka said, a tremor in her voice.

"Wait!" Kaito said, his knees still knocking. "I think it saw something that even it was afraid of, why would it have run? Also, just before it ran, its eyes were focused behind us"

"So, that means..." Ren trailed off.

Suddenly it dawned on Zero. "That means there is something even fiercer behind us!" he turned, slowly, then quickly around as he caught sight of the monster behind him.

"Zero! There are more of them!" Maru exclaimed, pointing to the bushes around them as the dark creature from before returned with five others, all of whom were carrying small daggers, and were obviously ready to attack.

"We can't escape!" Zero wailed, falling down in his fright and trying to scuttle backwards until he ran into Benkei's legs.

"Wha- Zero! Ohh man, that's a big dragon!" Benkei looked back and forth between the six dark creatures and the looming creature behind them

"Get out of our way you pathetic human ssscum!" one of the dark creatures hissed.

"Madoka, whatever you do, don't turn around!" Benkei said. "don't any of you dare turn around!"

"Why not?" Madoka asked, too scared to take her eyes off the dark creature that was waving its small dagger at her.

"What are these things?" Eito screamed.

"We are the darklingsssss of sssquad thhhhreee" one of the dark creatures replied.

Ren turned and screamed as a loud roar rippled through the air, shaking the ground. This was enough to sent the 'darklings' as they had called themselves skittering away in fear.

"I-is that what I think it is?" Madoka stammered, looking at the huge creature that was now in front of them as they had turned around.

"If you are thinking dragon, then I think so" Eito replied, hiding behind his brother.

Seeming satisfied with its work of scaring the darklings away, the dragon closed its mouth with its rows of sharp teeth and quietly looked at them, its golden-brown

reptilian eyes seeming to shoot fire at them as it turned its head back and forth. The group of bladers and mechanics in front of it didn't dare to move a muscle as it lifted its head higher through the trees, checking to see if the darklings were gone. Madoka took a step back as the blue-scaled section of the dragon nearest her whipped around, soon encircling the clearing- and them- in a ring of blue scales. The dragon recoiled as a darkling leapt out of the bushes and struck its face with one of his daggers.

The darkling laughed evilly, pointing its dagger right at the dragon's nose as it shook its head, trying to clear its vision from the impact.

"Sssss you will not lasssst long againsst sssssquad three!" it hissed as the dragon raised its head and pointed its long snout directly at the ground, hanging its face right over the small by comparison darkling and its comrades, who had joined it. The six darklings, using their wings, somehow managed to get into a rather shaky pyramid, and went for the dragon's throat. However, it dodged, swinging its head around behind them, and between the stunned group and the pile of darklings.

Zero and his friends saw the dragon open its mouth, hiding the darklings from view, and heard a crackling roar, as well as the darklings' yelling, which stopped suddenly as the dragon closed its mouth, revealing the six darklings still in their pyramid formation, fully encased in ice. The dragon turned to them and let out an echoing roar, then leapt into the air.

"Run! Get back to Metal Bey City before it returns!" Benkei yelled, pushing Madoka out of the clearing and picking up Ren, who had fainted the moment she saw the dragon. The four ran out of the forest, half-turning as they heard a roar behind them. Madoka was relieved to see that the dragon was flying away from them, out over the denser forest.

-one hour later-

The dragon landed near a small spring in the center of the forest. It coiled itself up into a neat ring, then began glowing. Its face grew shorter and smaller as the icy ridge on its back disappeared completely. The muscular dragons arms shrank in size as well, gradually becoming more and more human. Scales peeled back on the claws to reveal brown fabric, the tail also shrank, but did not completely disappear as the entire creature shrank in size. Once his transformation was complete, Gingka got up off the ground and brushed himself off, then went over to the water and splashed it on the stinging cut on his face, just under his left eye.

"Well, that went quite well" he muttered to himself, turning and pulling a couple

of twigs out of the red fur on his tail, which, as usual, had not completely disappeared. He looked at his reflection in the still water, then sighed. "Five days around here, guess I should find something to do, get dinner ready." he soon had a pile of sticks in the center of the clearing he had landed in, then went off to find something to eat before dark.

While Gingka was out hunting, a small brown bird alighted on the pile of wood he had placed next to the water. It pecked around for a few minutes, picking bugs off the wood, then hopped to the ground to find more. It followed a trail of ants to their hill, then went crazy, pecking around like nothing else mattered.

A couple of minutes later, Gingka returned to his makeshift camp with a few random pieces of fruit and some fish he had caught by freezing and melting the nearby river. He blew a fireball on the woodpile, then sat down and started spiking his fruit on a few sticks that had been sharpened by his own claws.

As soon as it noticed him, the bird flew over, landed on his shoulder, and pecked at his ear.

"Ow! Mom!" Gingka said, swatting at it.

The bird quickly flew off his shoulder and landed on the ground across the fire from him. In seconds, the small brown sparrow had changed into a woman with feathered wings and a brown tail. Her black eyes glittered across at her son as she smiled.

"Why do you always have to do that?" Gingka asked.

"Because, its funny to see your reaction, plus, you obviously need to work on your surroundings awareness" she replied, sitting down.

"My surroundings awareness is fine, you just need to stop being so sneaky about it. What are you doing here?" Gingka asked, sticking one of the sticks with a fruit on the end in the ground.

"I was just looking for you, your father told me you had gone to Metal Bey City" she replied.

"Yeah, I was just visiting some friends, I'm going back once the traces of dragon disappear"

"Alright, let me guess, there is a really cute girl there that you really like, so that's

why you are going back"

Gingka instantly flushed beet red. "That's not the only reason!" he protested.

"Even if it isn't, how are you planning on telling her about your abilities, assuming she doesn't know already?"

"I wasn't going to tell her at all" Gingka muttered.

"You have to tell her something, do you have an excuse for disappearing every time a darkling escapes into this world?"

"No, I don't."

"Seriously Gingka, the easiest thing is just to tell her. Your father knew about my abilities months before we started dating."

"I know, I'm just worried that if I tell her, she will hate me because of it, or she will be so afraid of me that she won't want to stay around."

"Ahh, so that's why you are not telling her yet"

Gingka nodded.

"Well then, I will leave it to you, but I can guarantee that things will likely go better if you tell her. Maybe not all at once, but warm her up to the idea, kind of drop a couple of hints to her, then tell her the whole thing out straight."

"I'll at least think about that" Gingka muttered, turning over the fish that were in front of him.

"I'll leave you to that then" his mother replied, getting up and shifting forms back to the small sparrow she had flown in as.

Gingka watched her as she flew off, then sighed. "Five more days" he muttered, getting bored with waiting for the fire he had made to roast the fish and lighting them on fire with one puff of fiery breath. "Good thing Madoka isn't here to see this" he chuckled, tossing the fish up in the air, lighting them, then swallowing them whole. By the time he had finished, it was quite dark. Gingka inhaled the fire, then froze the pond and walked across it to hide behind the waterfall, melting the ice with fire once he was across to keep anyone from getting to him. Finding a small ledge of rock behind the waterfall, he laid down carefully on the slippery rock, then

fell asleep.

Gingka: So, now I have actually used my powers? Maybe this idea of yours wasn't so bad after all...

Me: XD See? I told you it was awesome!